

BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

MAY 11, 2023

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman, presided.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman June M. Caron
Alderman Ernest Jette
Alderman John Sullivan

Members not in Attendance:

Also in Attendance: Alderman Thomas Lopez
Mario Andrade, Nashua School District Superintendent
Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager
Bobbie Bagley, Director of Division of Public Health and Comm. Services
Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse
Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer
Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS

Without objection, Chairman Dowd accepted a communication that came in after the agenda was prepared.

From: Adam A. Marcoux, President, Nashua Teachers' Union
Re: Support of R-23-117

There being no objection, Chairman Dowd accepted the communication and placed it on file.

Chairman Dowd

Did everyone get a copy? Good.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-23-117

Endorsers: Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.

APPROVING THE COST ITEMS OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NASHUA BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE NASHUA TEACHERS' UNION, LOCAL #1044 AFT, AFL-CIO, UNIT B PARA-EDUCATORS FROM JULY 1, 2022 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025 AND RELATED TRANSFERS

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGEON THE QUESTIONChairman Dowd

Okay, before we get to questions. We did receive a letter of recommendation on passing this from Adam Marcoux, President of the Teacher's Union and I believe Mr. Andrade is here to discuss the contract. If you want to just take a seat. You just give name and address and an overview of the contract.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Committee members. Mario Andrade Superintendent of Schools. So just a quick overview of the para-contract. What you see before you is a three-year contract covering school year's '22 to '23, '23 to '24 and '24 to '25. Year one is a base increase of 4% with steps is 4.85. Year two a 3.5% increase with steps is 4.27. In year three, it's a 3.5% increase to the base and with steps 4.28.

Additionally, any para-educator substituting for a teacher will receive their rate of pay plus an increment and the old kept contract that was \$6 for that for 30 minutes and up to \$50 a day. In the new contract, it's \$13 for the first 30 minutes and up to \$65 for a full day.

Additionally, staff working less than 30 hours a week will receive two additional personal days versus the zero days in the old contract and they also can accumulate up to 25 days of sick time versus the 10 in the previous contract. That's a high level overview. But I really want to thank the para-educators and the Union for working so collaboratively with the school administration, the BOE to finalize this deal. I know it took a little longer than expected but we really respect what they do every day in the classroom for our students, and our families, and the adults throughout the building. So it's a great partnership and I'm happy to present this before you tonight.

Chairman Dowd

Can you just briefly define what the para's role is in education?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yup. So there are three types of para-educators in the District. There's one that serve our most intensive students in our intensive needs classroom. So they're working a lot one on one with our special education students and that might be anything from toileting, to discrete trials, and really managing their behavior in their academics on in a really close proximity. Again, on a one-to-one where one para-educator is assigned to one or two students. Again, that's our neediest of children.

We also have para-educators who are instructional paras. So they might be assigned to a grade level or a team. So they're working on still student's IEP goals, or academic goals, or behavior goals but they're assigned to a more general population so not as intense but just as just as needed to make sure that students are succeeding academically in the least restrictive environment.

Then we also have technology para-educators and they are helping our technology department, or deploying devices, or helping students access technology. So those are three ranges. So really ranging from the most intense needs and again, anything from toileting, to discrete trials, to really that assistance for students in our self-contained classes to our instructional paras which is more of that academic that you might see them functioning and supporting students in our regular education classes and then our technology paras.

Chairman Dowd

So that first group, isn't that required by federal law?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

All three of them - two out of the three are really dictated by students IEPs. So it's an IEP decision depending on the intensity of the student's needs that would dictate the level of support. It's really about what the student need does and we want that student to have access and opportunity to the curriculum in the least restrictive environment. A one-on-one para-educational is sometimes more restrictive. That means that a student needs a little more help. When I say restrictive,

it's just you have someone much closer. Sorry if I'm leaning over. Someone much closer to you than someone who's waiting and a little more in a passive role making sure that you have enough level of academic struggle before they're helping you as opposed to someone who might have to manually help you manipulate your academics whether it's hand-over-hand, or helping you with manipulatives, or again toileting.

Chairman Dowd

And the other thing you mentioned briefly in your follow-up and your first statement was before - many times paras because of absences have to take over the teaching of the class. Before they will never be paid for a full day even though they're acting as a substitute teacher. So now they're getting paid as a substitute is that correct?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Just a clarification. So in the old contract, we increased our rates. So for the first 30 minutes, it was \$6 for the first 30 minutes and now it's up to \$13. Then if they were a full day substitute, it's their base plus \$50 in the old contract. Now it's their base plus \$65. So we just increased the rates.

Chairman Dowd

All right. Thank you. Questions for the Superintendent? Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

I'll yield to Alderman Sullivan.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you Alderman O'Brien. My questions are around staffing. My eyes were opened a little bit when I reviewed this that there were so many paras in the District - 404. Are we fully staffed at this time?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

We are not. So we have about 50 plus or minus maybe 5 or 10. So we range between 50 and 70 vacancies.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Currently and again so because a lot of these supports are dictated by student's IEP which becomes like a federal regulation at that point that we have to comply, we do contract with agencies, outside agencies, to bring in additional people to fill that support until we can hire internally.

Alderman Sullivan

Follow up.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Sullivan

How does that work when we outsource? Are beholden to their rate of pay or do they have to?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yes.

Alderman Sullivan

We are. Okay. How does that compare to what our paras make more or less?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So their hourly rate is higher but we do not pay any kind of benefits.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay, got it. One more please?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Sullivan

This contract from what I understand. I know a few paras in my ward. This was a long gap on this high level. What was the holdup?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

So rate of pay. What was the percentage increase? Mostly the rate of pay. We're also looking at one of the things we were hoping to do was actually increase the base level of pay – the incoming paras and so there was a lot of conversation on where does the money go? Was it in the first couple of years or at the top step? So we came to a good compromise to move forward.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Well congratulations on getting it done.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Thanks.

Chairman Dowd

Anyone else? Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. Mr. Andrade just to let you know that I am going to support. Very happy to but what I wanted to let you know that my wife was a para at the Broad Street Preschool for approximately 18 years. I think half the City learned toilet training from my wife which is very key. She does not want any complaints but however, a lot of things that the teacher had to work on work. Work on IEPs individuals. This would not be done if it wasn't for the para. The individual one-on-one or collectively with the group and everything and like it said, she loved her job and did for 18 years. I'm gonna definitely support this.

Unfortunately years when Brian McCarthy was alive, his wife was a para. Both him and I could not support the contract because of some silly rule that says that our wives worked at that. Even though the paras were the least paid in the City docket so I'm glad that would have taken care of them. They do a fine job.

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

If I may? I was a special educator for years and I worked first in residential schools and then self-contained rooms. So I always had a para educator in my classroom. So I know firsthand how important they are for the instruction in sports for students. So again, I see their value and they really taught me a lot on how to be a good teacher, and a good administrator, and how we need to support everybody in the District. So I agree with you, we wouldn't be able to function without our paras, our secretaries, our custodians. So I'm really happy that we were able to come to an agreement and present to you tonight.

Chairman Dowd

Any additional questions? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So I fully support the increasing the pay for para-educators. I understand that they do a great job for little pay but I noticed that the overall cost is going to be 4.8% in the first year, 4.3%, and 4.3% in subsequent years. The Mayor told us that the school budget was coming in at 3% increase. So how do you – are you going to have enough money to pay this? How is that going to happen?

Mario Andrade, Superintendent of Schools

Yes. So we budgeted to make sure that all of our educators were supported and then really making conscious decisions on other areas around our supplies or other to consolidate to make sure that we were having savings not to our human capital or direct support to students. So Mr. Donovan, the rest of the administration, the building, and principals really sharpened their pencils this year to make sure that we had a tight budget coming before you in a couple of weeks. So this contract will be supported with our budget request.

Alderman Jette

Okay, good. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? We have everyone here tonight so we don't have to do a roll call.

Alderman O'Brien

Correct.

Chairman Dowd

Motion on the floor is to approve the paras' contract. It's Resolution R-23-125. I'm sorry R-23-117.

MOTION CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES – None

TABLED IN COMMITTEE

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO REMOVE FROM THE TABLE R-23-125

MOTION CARRIED

R-23-125

- Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
- Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
- Alderman Richard A. Dowd
- Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA GENERAL, ENTERPRISE, SPECIAL REVENUE AND GRANT FUNDS

DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS OF THE PROPOSED FY23 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NASHUA

		<u>Appropriations</u>	<u>Revenue</u>
157	CITYWIDE COMMUNICATIONS		
	<u>PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES</u>		

171	PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES		
172	COMMUNITY HEALTH		
173	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH		
174	WELFARE ADMINISTRATION		
175	WELFARE ASSISTANCE		

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Dowd

All right. So this evening we're going to cover Citywide Communications. It's on page 116 in your new books and Public Health and Community Services. It's on page 125. The department numbers are listed in the left hand column on your agenda. So the first item is Citywide Communications and I believe Mr. Mansfield is here to shed some light. We go back a few years don't we? So when you start with your name and address and then would you give an overview what Citywide Communications is, what it covers, and responsibilities?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

My name is Bill Mansfield and I'm the Radio Systems Manager for the City of Nashua. I'm going to give you a brief overview of what we do and what we're responsible for. The mission of the Communications Division is to provide radio communications and support services to emergency and non-emergency city services in a manner that enables all employees to perform their mission and to keep our community safe and enhance the quality of life.

The Communications Division consists of two people - myself and another gentleman. These two employees are responsible for maintaining the City's radio network that encompasses five different facilities, a microwave network system that connects four different power facilities together, over 50 base stations, nearly 2,000 mobile and portable radios as well as their accessories, and these are all assigned to every department within the City. We also maintain numerous servers, switches, routers, firewalls in desktop computers. We maintain hundreds of different software packages that are included in the infrastructure of the radio system, six dispatch consoles between police and fire, three generators, large barns, power stations, HVAC units at each of the facilities, and provide pest control as well as we remove our own snow from the sites.

The Department is responsible for coordinating and working with the Mayor's Office, Legal Department, Planning Department to manage contracts, for the six city-owned cell towers. We also prepare and present budgets, proposals, purchase replacement equipment, manage several projects at one time, and constantly trying to learn new technology that is released in our equipment on a quarterly basis. In our spare time, we respond to alarms generated by the radio infrastructure that may take up to hours to troubleshoot and repair. Today was a perfect example. Got in this morning, there was an alarm in the system. We're still working on that at this point in time. We put it off till tomorrow morning. There are three of us working on it and there's only two employees.

It's a very complex system. We assist all the other City Departments with repairs, replacement, and configuration of the radio equipment. We maintain the radio templates within the radios. We make the radio templates with the radios. We reprogram the radios to keep up with the ever changing radio frequency changes that happened especially with mutual aid coming into the City. We have to make sure that the radio frequencies are the same so that we can communicate with each other. We uninstall radios from retired vehicles from the City. We reprogram and scheduled reinstallations into these vehicles. We train personnel on the proper operation of the radio equipment. We manage upgrades of radio equipment and infrastructure and ensure that we respond to the service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We are responsible for the entire radio system 365 days a year.

Over the years technology has changed dramatically and now every device is a computer. When technology changes, there is also opportunities to improve the safety of our City employees as well as the community as a whole. Over the past couple of years, the City began requiring that all construction within the City be tested and ensure that radio communications meet the standards set forth by the NFPA - National Fire Protection Agency. I believe that's what it stands for.

Alderman O'Brien

Yes.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So due to the increase in the building construction in the City and the remodeling of facilities, more and more of these facilities have been required to install what we call "bi-directional amplifiers". These bi-directional amplifiers improve the communications from within the building transmitted out of the building to our tower sites which improves basically the radio communications in general, especially for the firefighters that are operating within those buildings. These are expensive units. We're working on a plan right now that's being drafted between the Fire Marshal's Office and the Communications Division to have procedures in place and guidelines in place for the contractors to ensure that they have the proper equipment installed in these buildings, tested, and then to ensure that we, as a City, go in and test those and confirm that the equipment is operating the way it's supposed to.

Other projects that we're partnering with in the Fire Department are the installation of station alerting at each of the fire stations. It's called Purvis. The station alerting works with the radio system, fire dispatch, and also the City's fiber network. Along with this, we will be implementing new accountability software into each of the fire radios that allows for roll call of all fire personnel in a fire scene to ensure that they are safe and accounted for throughout the fire. The City will also be installing a new Opticom System for the traffic lights to improve the flow of traffic during fire apparatus response to emergency calls.

With all the new technology, the Communications Department doesn't have the resources available to assist with the implementation of all this new technology especially since we're in the process of preparing new equipment today for deployment to Police Department and Fire Department employees that probably will not be dispersed till late July, early August. Each and every one of the personnel will need to be trained on this new equipment on all three shifts.

In this year's budget, we requested \$65,000 to hire a part-time employee to assist with overseeing and implementing some of the new technology for the Fire Department. There appears to be an error in the book that you have because I received that later on this afternoon. In the part time wages, it states my proposed budget was \$149,360.

Alderman Jette

Can you give us the page or a number?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

I have no idea.

Alderwoman Kelly

122.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

I don't have the book. I only received a slip. So under part-time wages, the request was for \$149,360 and the Mayor's proposed budget is \$117,360 which is a reduction of \$32,000.

Alderwoman Kelly

Could you repeat what your request was?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

My request was \$149,360.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Also in the budget, there's seems to be another error where we had requested \$10,000 in the stipend line. Again, I don't know what line that is.

Alderwoman Kelly

51700, page 123.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

We requested \$10,000 for the stipend and it was reduced to \$6,000 by the Mayor.

Due to the number of projects that we have going on right now and the amount of work impending this year, these are the reasons why we have requested these particular increases. We will be looking to hire for a specific person for this part-time position. This person has to have institutional knowledge of the Fire Department, its fire hoses, its fire procedures, the City's fiber network, the City's current Opticomm System, and knowledge of the radio communications itself. The only person that could fill this would need to be someone that is within the Fire Department or retiring from the Fire Department. The line item cut for this employee would hinder our ability to hire someone to fulfill this position. I'm asking that the Budget Committee reinstate the original amount that was requested so that we can possibly hire somebody for this position. The person being hired for this position there's already been a job description made up. The job description encompasses everything that I spoke of for the Opticomm System, the new accountability software, the installation of the Purvis System. So it encompasses all that as well as eventually and probably in their spare time they can help out with the fire dispatch, computer-aided dispatch that is there as well, and working on specific radio issues on a daily basis. Eventually this may assist the Fire Department in getting a full-time position to assist with all of their IT needs as recommended by the Fire Department's Master Plan Study. Chief Buxton is here today if you had questions regarding that study. He's more in tune for what that is.

The Communications Department will also be implementing new encryption this year for the Police Department to meet federal standards. Adding a server to maintain encryption keys in the system and we will be implementing location services as well for each of the police officers. This will basically allow the dispatchers to see where the officer is if a panic button is activated and he doesn't have a chance to get to his radio to call for help.

Along with training and implementing all of this equipment for Fire and Police personnel, we will also be required to install major updates to all the mobile radios within the City. Again, basically for the accountability software as well as the new encryption software which is very time consuming. This year in the budget we've also added a revenue account. That particular account, I don't have the page number on it.

Alderwoman Kelly

122.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

The revenue account is to cover some of the costs of the system upgrade agreement that we have with Motorola Solutions. That revenue will be coming from the Town of Merrimack. The Town of Merrimack has two of their dispatch consoles tied into our radio system so they can have communications. They're basically paying for their part of that SUA. So that's what that revenue is that is there. I'm trying to think what else we have here.

The last thing I wanted to bring up is I'll be coming before the Board of Aldermen at some point during FY2024 basically to replace the power systems that are at the Police Department and Fire Department. These power systems are battery backup systems. They're UPSs. They're very large UPSs. That's why I call them power systems. They're due for replacement. Matter-of-fact, the batteries in those are overdue. There are 60 batteries in the system. The batteries are car size batteries. As a matter of fact, they're a little larger than car size and they're very expensive to replace. We're looking at changing the type of battery that we're going to be putting in these. Change the UPS systems because they're overdue for replacement and try to save the City money over the next twenty years by installing pretty much 20-year batteries instead of three-year batteries like what we have today. So that would be coming in the future. That's not part of the budget but I did want to bring that up.

Chairman Dowd

Thank you. Yeah the other piece was that two or three years ago, we added that second person to your group because we realized with the knowledge you have of the programming and everything else on those radios if you ever get hit by a bus, there's a lot of buses around the police station. We would be in serious, serious trouble. So we added that second person. The technology and the workload is increasing exponentially and it's extremely important to all of the divisions. So questions? Yes, Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

I had a couple clarifications if I could? So you said that you were looking for \$65,000 to hire that part-time employee. The difference between what you said your proposed was only 32 are we only covering half the year there?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So no. The entire proposal was \$149,000, let me just double check the number here. So there's already a part-time employee - that is myself. The total cost would be basically the Mayor cut \$32,000 out of that. So \$32,000 plus the remainder of what is in that \$117,000. So if you add that 117 to the 32, that would pretty much come out to 65.

Alderwoman Kelly

So some of it is in there is what you're saying?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Some of it is in there, yes.

Alderwoman Kelly

But not all of it. Okay.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

I think there's 32 in there. I think 33 is or it's vice versa \$32,000 or \$33,000.

Alderwoman Kelly

So your proposed requested \$149,360 includes the full 65 for that part timer? Okay.

Second clarification I had if I could? So I just want to make sure I'm clarifying. So you said that there was \$4,000 more in your stipend request so I added that. My understanding is that makes your proposed departmental budget up - should be up \$36,000?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Correct.

Alderwoman Kelly

So I'm right? So that would be just for everybody page 124 for the total department proposal would be \$747,346. I just to make sure we had that. Those are my clarifications. I probably have actual questions but I want to make sure those were...

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman O'Brien

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah, I'm gonna offer some form of clarification Mr. Chairman if I may. Coming up within the fire service, I mean gone are the days where somebody's working on the street boxes and stuff like that. But the Fire Department has been instrumental in working and installing the fiber optic system within the City and different things like that and we really

benefit with this. But what has happened technology as everybody knows that some of the business has moved on. It comes and goes. You can't even buy a Gateway computer anymore or anything else like that and to have somebody fill this particular position at the money that you are quoting, I don't think, you know, this sounds almost like a bargain based deal. This person is just add water and mix and he's ready to go right from the first day of the job. So I'm gonna offer support on this. The technology today mandates it. Unfortunately, there's no other way around it. They need somebody to make this system kind of operable. So and what happens when it fails? You got to keep in mind when the system fails, you know fires don't stop, or medical costs don't stop, or anything else like that. So it's relatively important to the integral to the emergency services that are provided. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Dowd

I'm going to go Alderman Jette and then come back to you.

Alderwoman Kelly

That's fine.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you. So I apologize. I appreciate Alderwoman Kelly's wanting to clarify but I didn't quite catch the clarification. So what I'm showing is under wages part-time that you're requesting \$117,360 and you're correcting that. You want to increase that by how much?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So my original number that I had submitted was – get back to my notes here.

Alderwoman Kelly

149,360

Chairman Dowd

Can you clarify and answer the question?

Alderwoman Kelly

Sure. I think I can but I don't want to speak for Mr. Mansfield. So what I asked was he has asked for \$65,000 but the difference in what he requested was only \$32,000. So what he told me was the other part was already in there but not the full. The 32 gets us to the full 65 that he wants. Does that make sense?

Alderman Jette

No.

Alderwoman Kelly

So portion of it was in there but not all of it, correct.

Alderman Jette

So can anyone tell me what the correct part-time wages, part-time numbers should be?

Alderwoman Kelly

149,360 is what the department requires.

Alderman Jette

Say that again?

Alderman Kelly

\$149,360

Alderman Jette

\$149,360.

Alderman Kelly

Correct.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you. I have a follow up question.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Jette

So when you talked about - forgive my ignorance but when you talked, it sounded like there was a transmitter in the buildings so the Fire Department can communicate with headquarters I assume. Is that what we're talking about?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Yeah. So the NFPA came up with a standard a few years back which is put into the Building Code that mandates that there has to be a certain quality of communications. There's a DB level, decibel level that has to be set at. It can't be any worse than that decibel level. I believe in the City of Nashua with our radio system its NEG 79. The level has to be met in every part of the building so anybody who's having new construction whether it be commercial, or apartment buildings, not homes but multi-residential facilities, they're required to hire a company to come in and conduct testing to ensure that once that building is built and they do it right towards the end of construction before the ceilings are put in, they'll go in and hire a company and do testing throughout the entire building. If any part of that building fails that NEG 79 decibel, then they're required to put an antenna system in the building wherever the dead spots are and put what they call a "bi-directional amplifier". It's a radio unit and then it gets transmitted off of an antenna on the roof.

Alderman Jette

Okay. And that's at their expense?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

That is at their expense. The part that it becomes the City's expense is when we have to go out and inspect that to make sure it's done. Then on top of that, they're required by the NFPA Standard to have that unit maintained every year. So now we have to keep up with all the paperwork to make sure that they have a maintenance contract in place to ensure that that system is going to be operational all the time.

Alderman Jette

Okay. And for that inspection and those annual inspections, can we charge for that? Do they pay for that?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So right now there's nothing set in place. We're working on a draft policy for that. Right now, usually I go out or my partner goes out with the Fire Marshal's Office when they're doing their final inspection and we work together and test out the system to ensure that it's operating properly. So right now there's no charge for that but eventually once we come before the Board of Aldermen with a new draft proposal, we will want a permitting process so that the at least the City can recoup some of the funds.

Alderman Jette

Good. Glad to hear that. And my last question.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Jette

When you talked about batteries for the Police at least the Police Department also the Fire Department, you said car size batteries. Are you talking about 12 volt batteries or are you talking about like EV type batteries?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

They're actually marine batteries. They're 12 volt batteries but I actually have pictures.

Alderman Jette

That's okay. You're talking fairly small?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

I'm talking about batteries that are above this big. I'm getting too old to lift them.

Alderman Jette

As opposed to an EV battery which.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Oh for electric vehicles?

Alderman Jette

Yeah, okay. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

The same batteries that are in your remote units near the towers? Those batteries are pretty good size.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Those are what we want to replace the system with. We want to have that system...

Chairman Dowd

Okay.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

In the Police and Fire Department because those are 20 year batteries.

Chairman Dowd

Yep.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

And I won't be here in twenty years.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan did you have a question?

Alderman Sullivan

Yes, thank you very much. You get to benefit from the fact that this is the first time we've looked at this budget book so I'm all over this thing trying to figure it out. So I'm gonna go back to the clarifications laid out by Alderwoman Kelly and then Alderman Jette because I want to make sure that I have the number correct. In the book, your total appropriation for FY'24 should be \$743,346.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

No. It should be \$747,346. You may be missing the \$4,000 out of the stipend.

Alderman Sullivan

Oh, the stipend. Could you repeat that one more time?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

\$747,346.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. So of that - now let's see \$143,000 delta between last year and this year. What goes into that? What's making up that 143,000? It's the part time employee which you currently do not have?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Correct.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay and that is how much?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

\$65,000.

Alderman Sullivan

65 of the 143. Okay. Do you know - and then the other \$4,000 is the stipend add on, right?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Correct.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. So now I'm at \$69,000. So what is the balance? What's the balance of that delta?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Some of it is going to be part of the fringe benefits package.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

That's going to be part of it. I cannot calculate that because I don't know how they calculate it.

Alderman Sullivan

So okay, I'm just trying to get the big chunks here.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

In fact, if you give me one second I can tell you. A lot of it is part of the maintenance contracts. You can subtract 12 out of that 12 whatever that number is. For that, this increase in the training costs because of the additional employee may need that training.

Alderman Sullivan

Yup. You have one full-time employee or two?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

One full-time, one part-time currently.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. So now you're gonna have two part-time, one full-time.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Correct.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

All set?

Alderman Sullivan

Yep.

Chairman Dowd

Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. I think to Alderman Sullivan because that was actually one of my questions. So I know you said that the line was incorrect in the salary line but does the fringe benefits account for that part-time employee?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So the fringe benefits would only account for that \$33,000 portion of that part-time employee's salary. So the fringe benefits would end up going up. Although - and that's still the final number that 747,346. That includes the full benefits of that \$65,000 part-time employee.

Alderwoman Kelly

Okay.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Because this is the actual document that was submitted for the budget. So it was done by Finance and everything else.

Alderman Kelly

So can you can I just ask a clarifying question there?

Chairman Dowd

Sure.

Alderman Kelly

So in that document that you're referencing that 51,340, that is correct number under 52300?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

52300 - yes \$51,340.

Alderman Kelly

Okay. I just wanted to make sure if they didn't accommodate that was correct. So I have a few questions if I could? Question number one - I'm going to go away from our \$65,000 part time employee for a moment. I was a little bit interested in this Merrimack revenue stream. It's something that we haven't done before is that true?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Correct.

Alderman Kelly

How do we calculate what their costs or what that cost is to us?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

I didn't calculate - so the cost is basically it was done by Motorola because they're the ones who do the contracts. The problem is it was calculated by them. Let me just put it that way because they calculate by console. There's two consoles over there. They can't calculate by console. So everything's calculated by a base station, a switch. There's so many different things like firewalls. Everything has a number to it. They're dealing with just two consoles. They don't deal with the other infrastructure portion of this. Eventually to go further into your question that's probably gonna answer a little more and eventually the Town of Merrimack is going to be charged for usage of our radio system, which would be another revenue charge which would not go towards. So on top of the revenue, they will also be paying the maintenance fee. That is coming in time.

Alderman Kelly

Okay. That was literally going to be my question. Are there any staffing or maintenance that's not being covered? Sounds like we're just covering hardware in that 12,000, correct? You're going to be adding on maintenance and all of that in the future?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Yes.

Alderman Kelly

Is there a reason why we're not doing it now?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

So because they're not totally using our system. Just the consoles are really using it. They're still operating on their own VHF radio system at this point in time but they had the money at the time so we just had them connect it at that time so.

Alderman Kelly

Okay. Now I'm gonna go back to the part-time employee if I could. So you said a lot of things about the description of the type of person that this needs to be. Sounded pretty specialized. Are you pretty confident that you can hire that person in the next year?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Yes.

Alderman Kelly

Have someone in mind?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Yes.

Alderman Kelly

Awesome. Great. Love to hear it. I already actually already answered the fringe benefits so I'm good. Thank you.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Just I don't know if it's a point of order or whatnot but if we were to vote on this budget as it's printed in here, then Mr. Mansfield would not get the appropriation that he would want. Should we get a corrected sheet with the numbers that he stated? Because the numbers I have if I voted yes on his budget, he would be appropriated \$711,000. He's asking for \$747,346. I don't want to shortchange his department.

Chairman Dowd

I think you'll find that throughout the budget book in the divisions. The Mayor talks to the different divisions and makes cuts and the cuts can either stay or be put back in. What we have in the book is what the Mayor has authorized. To add something when we do our wrap-up sessions, members of the Budget Committee can make motions to add or subtract from the budget. So that would change the number but at that time.

Alderman Sullivan

But if you look at Fiscal Year 2024 Department Proposed, it says \$711,346. Fiscal Year Mayor Proposed, same number not the \$747,346 that Mr. Mansfield had corrected. My concern is if we say yes to this budget, are we saying yes to this number? Apparently, there were errors, or somebody left something out, or whatever. I just don't want the department to be changed \$50,000.

Chairman Dowd

So I believe you came to an agreement with the Mayor on the budget but you would ask for more?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

No. We had a discussion and basically they called me on Monday and said that they were cutting money out of the budget. That's all they said.

Chairman Dowd

So it should say that you asked for this. The Mayor cut that.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Correct.

Chairman Dowd

So we'll have to talk to Mr. Griffin about fixing it.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Alderwoman Kelly

And excuse me if I missed it but I was wondering if when we go to have our discussions that we could get a description of that part-time employee. I don't see it anywhere in your goals about bringing that part time employee on so I just wanna make sure I have that information.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Would you like the job description?

Alderwoman Kelly

I would love that if you could send it to Donna, she can share it with all of us.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

I will do that.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

So is Merrimack the only town that's benefiting from our radio system?

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Yes.

Alderman Jette

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

So any other questions for Mr. Mansfield? Are there any questions for Chief Buxton? No. Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

Since he came out, I would love to hear his thoughts on this part-time employee and how it would benefit the department.

Chairman Dowd

Chief Buxton would you like to add the importance to this position that as far as the Fire Department's concerned?

Steve Buxton, Nashua Fire Chief

I think Mr. Mansfield did a great job describing all of the duties that we're looking to encumber in this position. Currently, there is nobody catching this ball in our organization. It's a shortfall in our area. The Master Plan that we did identified this weakness for us and it is one of the recommendations. I think it's the number five, six, or seven in the recommendation list of the 40 or so things that they requested we work towards accomplishing. As you know, we've slowly been pecking away at them and this is our first step into the IT world.

I will tell you all of the products that we use now come with a software license. We hire firefighters and we do very well there but IT is not our strong suit and we need somebody watching that in our organization formulating a management plan for our IT and also watching for our vulnerabilities in that area, so.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Kelly?

Alderman Kelly

Don't you wish I was on Zoom tonight? Just kidding. Thank you for that explanation. If it's not too much if you could re-forward your Master Plan recommendations that would just be nice to have at the top of the inbox.

Steve Buxton, Nashua Fire Chief

Certainly.

Alderman Kelly

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Not for the Chief but for the Chair. The Mayor discussed last night, Alderman Kelly made me think of it, we discussed last night a contingency budget about an Information Security Officer position perhaps. When do we hear about that because I heard what the Chief said and I heard software?

Chairman Dowd

I believe, I could be wrong because I'm not in the day-to-day communications with the Mayor on this stuff, but I believed that they're waiting for the recommendations from that private company without not getting into too much detail. I think that there is going to be a move to strengthen the IT structure in the City so this could end up being part of that.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay, great. Thanks.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Thanks Chief. All right no other questions.

Bill Mansfield, Radio Systems Manager

Thank you everyone.

Chairman Dowd

Just to reiterate as we go through all these budgets, you may be coming up with questions, additions, deletions that you want to suggest, add to the budget. At the wrap-up sessions, that's when it gets factored in and the wrap-up sessions are after the public hearing on the budget. So that's when we make changes and when the Budget Committee is done with their recommendations and it goes to the full Board to vote on the overall budget and if it's passed, that's the budget. Yes, Alderman Sullivan.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Just to refresh my memory. When the time comes for budget edits, can we add a whole line? Do we delete a whole line? Is it binary all or nothing or can you kind of reduce it by 50%? Can you refresh my memory on that?

Chairman Dowd

If the line is already in the budget you can make a motion to increase or decrease that line.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

And if you're adding a new line which means that's something new that's not in the budget, then that would be - you'd be able to do that as well. Just one - you need two thirds majority at the Board of Aldermen to increase the Mayor's budget. You only need eight votes if we're decreasing or keeping it the same.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. All right. Thanks.

Chairman Dowd

Yes, Alderman Caron.

Alderman Caron

Thank you. I'm new to this. But as Alderman Sullivan was stating during Mr. Mansfield's conversation, I just happen to look at the next group that's coming on and their department proposed budget is actually the same as what the Mayor is proposing. So I think really need clarification as to how much money they actually asked for. It shouldn't be reading the same if I remember correctly.

Chairman Dowd

The previous years, the budget book said the department came in and asked for this. The Mayor allowed them this and that's not in there and that's because of that new software we're using.

Alderman Caron

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

I'm going to talk to Mr. Griffin about making sure we know what the departments asked for and what was taken out because I believe that Director Bagley is indicating that something came out of her budget as well.

Alderman Caron

Okay. I think that would be helpful for the Committee to understand.

Chairman Dowd

I think from a presentation standpoint, they can tell us now but we'll see what we can do about getting those numbers.

Alderman Caron

Thank you.

Alderman Wilshire

I would expect to have to rerun this whole thing. I mean because that's probably throughout the whole budget, right?

Chairman Dowd

I'm not familiar with their software so I'll talk to them tomorrow.

Alderman Caron

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

I know they were striving to get this printed, so.

All right the next item we're going to discuss is Public Health and Community Services. Director Bagley would you like to bring your people up and fill in any unoccupied seats.

So Director Bagley if you would give us an overview, introduce your staff, and then give us an overview of your budget and then bring in your people you'd like.

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Yes, thank you Chair. Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services, and we're here to present the overall budget for the Division. We will do that by presenting each department and each of the department heads will speak specifically to their budgets. Our Division of Public Health and Community Services serves as the chief public health strategist for our City of Nashua and for the greater Nashua public health region. Our Division is the only accredited Health Department in the State of New Hampshire and we've also gone up for reaccreditation. So we're waiting to hear back from our National Association with regards to that.

The Division as a whole provides a wide range of services as you hear from each of the departments and is really important for us to be able to maintain our staffing as well as our budget lines to be able to meet the overall mission of our division which is to promote, protect, and preserve the health and well-being of the greater Nashua region.

So I will start with the Community Services Department. The way that this is presented is a little different than what we're used to and we also don't have the same page numbers that you all have. So I'm assuming that you have a page - I have page five on my page for the Division. Do you have page 125?

Alderman Caron

126.

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Okay and so 126 is the Community Services Department. So on 127 is where we have the appropriation details for each of the lines. Community Services Department the budget did come in at what was requested by me as the head for this department and does agree with what the Mayor proposed. The increases under the wages line is based on the cost of living increases and what I'll do is just speak to any variations in the...

So for Community Services, I'll just speak to the variances in some of the lines where you will see either a significant increase or decrease in. Overall for the Community Services budget there are for the line items, they pretty much lined up to what I needed for this department to run efficiently. The difference that you'll see and if we go down under other services under 55 on page 127, there's a decrease that you'll see in the telephone and the cellular appropriation and that's

because we have a significant amount of grant funds for Fiscal Year '24 that will cover the costs of any additional telephones. So you'll see a decrease there of \$500 in that line but it's covered under the grant services.

There's a decrease under our dues and membership which is 55200. Again, for the same reason because there's additional support that comes from some of the grants that we receive. That will be pretty much the same for all of these. The decrease on the community services will be because of the grants that support some of these lines.

Mileage reimbursement was decreased about \$500.

Conference and seminars remains the same.

Printing services has decreased about 500.

Other contracted services decreased by about \$2,000 but, again, because of the grant support that we receive for that.

On page 128 for educational supplies has decreased by \$1,000 because of the grant support under - let's see here - just a slight increase in subscriptions because of memberships. Overall, that is it for Community Services.

Community Health Improvement Plan - a \$1,500 decrease. We actually asked for support for our some of our hospitals to support the work that's done for that. That's it for this grant. So overall, the bottom line here the \$406,510 does meet my need for the services, other community services, because there's a significant amount of grant funding that will be available for Fiscal Year '24. It may look different for Fiscal Year '25 but for right now, we're pretty good for Community Services.

Chairman Dowd

So that's what you presented to the Mayor and that's what he allowed just to clarify.

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Yes.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

You started to answer my question. My question was well first of all, thank you for coming in the way you did and that you have some grant funding that's really helpful from our perspective of the budget. I just wanted to know how many of those grants are recurring grants or is this going to be a one-time reduction and the next year we're going to have to find that money again?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

So thank you for that question. So the grants that we currently have that are supporting the staff under Community Services will - most of that has come in from the COVID dollars. The increase in the amount that I have for Community Services budget and Fiscal Year '24 will be the end of that additional funding. So in Fiscal Year '25 for some of the staff that I have for Community Services the majority of those that are funded the additional positions that came under the additional funds for COVID, those positions will no longer be there. So the Community Health workers, unless I could find other fundings from some other sources, at least two of those positions will no longer be at the Division. Our Behavioral Health Specialists that we have was also brought in under those funds and so once those funds are expired again, we'll have to find additional funding for that position as well as well as we have a Medical Assistant that's funded with these grant funds. That position will need to find funding for that position. And that's it.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

Just a couple of questions. First, can you tell us a little more about the CHINS Program?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

The CHINS is the program that we support with the Youth Council. So that is involved - what's the acronym for that? I'm sorry.

Alderman O'Brien

Child In Need of Services.

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Yes. So that's the \$20,000 that we give to the Youth Council to support the services that they provide and they have been able to expend all of that that funding since we've increased that to \$20,000.

Alderman Lopez

If I may?

Chairman Dowd

Yes.

Alderman Lopez

But that also represents a leveraging partnership where we're giving them \$10,000 but we're benefiting from the infrastructure and support that they offer as an organization?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Yes.

Alderman Lopez

And then my other question was there was some discussion about possibly creating a closer collaboration I think with Community Health Workers and the Nashua Police to augment their ability to respond to mental health crisis. Is that reflected here or is that something you're still working on?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

So that position is covered under the funds that we have for the COVID response. That position will be able to fund for a year and then after that funding is expired, then that position will have to be funded by the City.

Alderman Lopez

Final question. Is there any opportunity to offer services where we'd be able to charge insurance and to make revenue?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Yes and we are looking into that under our Community Health Department.

Alderman Lopez

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All set on Community Services. Miss Bagley, next.

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Okay. You'll hear from the other three departments at the Division. If there's any differences in what was proposed by the department, we'll share that information this evening as well.

Hi, good evening, Director. Can you hear me?

Alderman O'Brien

Excuse me, can you introduce yourself with your name first for the transcribing. Thank you.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Good evening. My name is Kim Bernard. I'm the Chief Public Health Nurse for the City of Nashua Division of Public Health and Community Services. I'm going to review the FY24 Community Health Department budget. The first page is on 130 - an Overview of revenue and appropriations. For revenue, there were a few areas and there are some changes which I will address. Under event fees, we decreased. We have in the past had conferences where we get revenue from the conferences and all of this was pre-pandemic. So we are getting back into that. So for FY24, we are anticipating to have a smaller scale conference. So that's why the revenue there is less.

We have a new line prescription drug rebates and that is in line with our new HIV Prep Program which is prophylaxis for folks that are high risk for developing HIV. We just rolled this program out in February through our Sexual Wellness Program. We have joined with a partnership with a pharmacy that will do all of the billing for us and also helps us find money for folks that do not have insurance and can't afford the drug. So we have a very loose budget here. We are anticipating at least \$10,000 from that Prescription Drug Rebate Program that we can use within our programming moving forward.

Then our Medicare reimbursements we increased that because as Bobbie had alluded to, we are starting to charge more under Medicare and we're learning how to charge under Medicaid. We have, if you remember from I believe last year or the year before, we started with an electronic medical record or an EMR and we are able to bill through that medical record. We're currently training to do so. So what we will be doing is retroactively adding all of our flu for an administration fee not for the flu vaccine but we are able to charge that to Medicare. So we will be getting some revenue from there and then we're anticipating the Medicaid as well. There are other things that we'll be able to put in for reimbursement for as well.

Under appropriations, you'll see the biggest change here is under salaries and wages number 51 from \$451,065 to \$493,592. That is in line with the step increases that staff will be getting this year. Pretty much everything else is pretty consistent.

All right. So moving on to appropriation detail which is page 131. I'll go through and talk about the changes here. Under 51 salaries and wages, we discussed the salary. Overtime, we did not have any funds under that and we do have some staff. Most of our staff are salaried but we do have a few staff, some community health workers, and an administrative assistant that are sometimes here after hours depending upon what times our clinics get out. So it's difficult to schedule and there is some overtime.

Under fringe benefits about the same.

Property services - we are seeing an increase in prices for our both our disposal services and our security services. So we've increased both of those lines to be to absorb the increases. Also under our security services, we added a buffer for service calls because we're finding that we've had a few service calls for our vaccine fridges and it's really important that we make sure that we have a cold chain in place for those vaccines.

Equipment and repairs, let's see. Decreased our vehicle repairs and maintenance. We had some planned maintenance for FY23 so we'll be utilizing that. We don't anticipate that we'll need many repairs but we do want to have some money in that line just in case. This is for our mobile health van.

Under Other services, telephone cellular, we decreased that. We also in Community Health have grant funds that support the programming that we do so we're able to utilize some of the grant funding for telephone and cellular telephones.

Mileage reimbursement - same reasoning. We've decreased that in half.

Seminars and conferences - we have decreased that somewhat. We do have some grant funding so that we can utilize that for any conferences and seminars. We want to make sure that we have education available for our staff. We do have several - well most of our staff are licensed or registered in the medical field so we need to make sure that those CEUs are available for them. Let's see.

Same with employee training and certifications. We can put we can put seminars under that but for anything else, we use the conference and seminars line.

Other contracted services - that has to do with our electronic medical record and the fees that were charged for that as well as our contract with Dr. Grant who is our Medical Director.

Next section is supplies and materials number 61. Protective clothing - we increased somewhat because we do have some grant funds but some of those are quite restrictive. So if we need to purchase anything protective clothing for safety, for our staff we utilize that line.

Educational supplies - we have a lot of funding in our grant and several of our grants for educational supplies. A lot of those we can get at either a low cost or no cost so we don't didn't need that high of a line this year.

Medical supplies as well we decreased in that line as well.

Vaccines we increased. Vaccines are more expensive. Each year we're seeing an increase in the cost of those and also medications that we purchase for our sexual wellness clinics.

Miscellaneous supplies - we increase to \$1,000. This is a catch all for anything that we don't have a line for and we utilize that line.

Let's see the next page. Supplies, materials and publications. Publications - we decreased that line. We use that line just to make sure that we update any outdated items such as books, nursing books, or medical related books that we need.

Program expenses - that is the line that goes along with our new program - the sexual wellness program for HIV prep.

So the amount that was proposed was \$712,699 and that is what the Mayor proposed as well. That number is consistent with what we'll need to run the department efficiently.

Chairman Dowd

Any questions for Community Health? Yes, Alderman Sullivan.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Two questions. First on the expense side. The indirect cost allocation is down \$42,100. If I missed that, I apologize. What's behind that?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Would you like me to speak to that Bobbie?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Yes please.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

So indirect costs have to do with our grants, and correct me if I'm wrong, but with the overhead that is put into the completion of our grants and that is something that is figured out by our Finance Director.

Alderman Sullivan

So that's essentially administrative work?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Yes.

Alderman Sullivan

Just to follow up, please?

Chairman Dowd

Yes.

Alderman Sullivan

On the revenue side, the prescription drug rebate plus \$10,000 is that a federal program?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

No.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Where does that come from? Is that State driven?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

The program - it's a private pharmacy that we have a contract with.

Alderman Sullivan

Oh, okay.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

There are 430B pharmacy and what will happen is the difference between the insurance and the cost of the medication and what the fee that they charge, then that money comes back to us where we can put that money back into our program. So for example if we have a client that cannot afford to have some of the testing done that we require prior to prescribing HIV prep or and also with our clients that receive HIV prep, they have to come every three months for either education, or testing, or both and sometimes there's a cost that is associated with those tests. Then that way we have money to cover those tests or the medication.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So kind of along that same line. We hear about, you know, the manufacturers of the opioid drugs having been sued and paying lots of money in settlement. Is any of that money filtering down to you for opioid treatment or?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

I'll defer to Bobbie for that question if I may.

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Thank you for that question. So the Opioid Abatement Trust Fund has been set up under the City of Nashua and comes through and is dispersed through the Mayor's office. When that funding does come in, our Division of Public Health and Community Services works very closely with the Mayor's Task Force for substance abuse disorder to disperse that funding when it comes in. Nashua is named as one of the 23 subdivisions that are a part of that large settlement. So over the next 18 years, we will be receiving funding through those different settlements with the pharmaceutical companies. They may come in different amounts but the expectation is that there will be funding that comes through over the next 18 years that we will be able to use in our community to fight the opioid epidemic. It doesn't come directly to our department. It comes in through the trust that we've set up onto the City of Nashua.

Alderman Jette

Okay. From that trust do you get any part of that?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Our Division does not get any of that directly unless we also submit a proposal to the Mayor for some of those funds. Right now most of the money that we get for opioid abatement comes through our State grants that are passed through SAMSA which is at the federal level.

Alderman Jette

Okay. And may I continue?

Chairman Dowd

Go ahead.

Alderman Jette

And so you've got under supplies and materials, vaccines/medicines, \$23,000. So isn't there State or federal money? Isn't there some other source of money other than the Nashua taxpayers for COVID, flu, shingles, TB, the childhood diseases, HIV, STD all that stuff? Isn't there some other source of other than the Nashua taxpayers?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

There is. So this covers some vaccines and then other vaccines. We do get like all of our children's vaccines. We do get those from the State so it does cover that but this is just partial vaccine and medication.

Alderman Jette

So besides the \$23,000 that you're asking for here, you're getting other money from someplace else for vaccines?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Yes or the federal government. Through the State we...

Alderman Jette

Do you have any idea how much that is?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

I don't know off the top of my head but I certainly could look into it.

Alderman Jette

Okay but I trust you're maximizing whatever you can get from elsewhere?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Yes, we are. There are some barriers that are in place with who we can give vaccine to depending on which bucket that we have. I call them “buckets”. You know we have a bucket that is for folks that are uninsured or underinsured. Sometimes we can't give vaccine to certain folks like that have insurance because we get it from a certain bucket from the State that is only set aside for people that may not have insurance. So there are some limitations with all the different vaccines that we give because we have just about every vaccine besides travel vaccines in our clinic.

Alderman Jette

Could I?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Jette

So with COVID and now that the COVID emergency order is expiring tonight, how does that affect your ability to give COVID vaccinations?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Sure. That's a really great question. So with the end of the emergency order, we will still be getting COVID vaccine at no cost from the federal government until that supply runs out. The State has let us know and I was actually on a call with the CDC today that they don't anticipate that will happen for several months. They're looking maybe mid-summer. Then once that happens, there's going to be commercialization of COVID vaccine. They did say that there will be folks that are without insurance and people that may not have the funds to pay for a vaccine, there will be some programming for that. As far as for us in the City and the Division, we do have an immune COVID immunization grant that we do have funds in and we set aside funds anticipating that this commercialization would occur. So we are prepared to be able to purchase vaccine.

Now another piece of this is that the State will provide it is actually in the immunization schedule for children. So if you are under the age of 19, you will be able to receive the COVID vaccine moving forward without an issue. It's more so for the adults and that's where the commercialization piece will come into play.

Alderman Jette

Okay. And I think one last thing. So you know I want to give you the opportunity to make a pitch for telling people that even though the emergency order is expiring that COVID is still out there and they still want to take advantage of.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Oh, I like you. Yes. It's very important that folks - it doesn't equate. This end of the emergency order does not equate to COVID is you know obsolete. COVID is still around. It's still taking lives unfortunately and it's important that we still stay vigilant on making sure that we are practicing safe behaviors. We're washing our hands. We're staying home if we're sick. We're wearing a mask if we're sick and getting vaccinated. There's a new vaccine schedule that's out. It's a lot easier now. It's a lot more streamlined as far as with the new bi-valiant, new herb-valiant vaccine that is out now where you get one. If you have never been vaccinated against COVID-19, you just get one vaccine and you are fully vaccinated. There are some I won't go into all the different scenarios but with children it's different and with other populations that may be at higher risk such as immunocompromised folks or folks that may be over the age of 65. There are some other schedules that we would follow. But yeah it's really important that that folks still, you know, stay up-to-date on their vaccines. We offer them in our clinic. You can call our department and get an appointment and come on down and get your COVID vaccine. We also have tests. So if anyone out there needs rapid tests, we also have a lot of tests at no cost. So people can just come in. They don't have to call. They can just come in and get them. So thank you for that.

Alderman Jette

You're welcome. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

I have Alderwoman Kelly first.

Alderwoman Kelly

I'll be brief because I think I might have answered my question. I was looking at the HIV prep program that you were discussing and also the screenings and how they've doubled year after year. My question was whether that was due to a community need or increase capacity on your part? I did see that you rebranded.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

We did rebrand. Sometimes it's hard to interpret the data because of what we've seen over the pandemic too. So we are seeing - and this is a nation-wide issue is we are seeing an increase in STDs. We are seeing an increase of folks that are at higher risk that are coming to see us. So when I think that may have something to do with the numbers because if they're higher risk, we're going to be testing for things that we would test high risk folks for. So then in turn, we might have more positive tests. So yeah, did that answer your question?

Alderwoman Kelly

It did.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Okay. Great.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

So first, I am really looking forward to the commercialization of the COVID vaccine. I don't think anything can go wrong with that. It went really well with people with diabetes and I know the space program is better than ever. A starship fell out of the sky like two weeks ago. So I see that as a potential issue and I want to echo Alderman Jette and Nurse Bernard's comments that people if you can get vaccinated, you should take advantage of these and that has a direct impact on how Nashua experiences these different crises.

I wanted to talk a little bit or confirm a little bit about the different types of things that you vaccinate against. There's community impact to be considered as well as just like what are Nashua taxpayers getting for free? So I mean I don't think it takes a genius to realize that a big flu outbreak in our schools might impact, you know, staffing, and sick and overtime, and children being exposed to things, and having a number of safety issues. Some of the things that we briefly touched upon such as decreases in STDs, those aren't just like recreational faux pas. Those have long term debilitating effects as well?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

Yes, absolutely.

Alderman Lopez

So I just think it's important to highlight that that while the Health Department does try to get as many grants and funding sources outside the Nashua taxpayers tax base, we do benefit from the money that spent. Like I think very much exponentially because we don't put that much of our budget into Community Health. I have long argued we can put more and I think we get way more out of the money that we put in than we do in a lot of other areas. It just doesn't get the same kind of attention and the same kind of visibility because if you're successful in public health, then there isn't a crisis and there isn't a call to action. It's where there's those stumbles, and miscommunications, and failures to prevent that we really start to struggle.

Is it come to your department to talk about Lyme in the community and efforts to prevent or is that more going to be environmental health?

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

They would be the experts - Environmental Health, the experts. It isn't a reportable disease any longer for the State of New Hampshire so we don't do disease investigations surrounding Lyme.

Alderman Lopez

Okay. I'll hold my questions for later.

Chairman Dowd

Environmental Health.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Good evening. My name is Heidi Peek-Kukulka. I am Nashua's Health Officer. I'm here to talk about the Environmental Health Department's budget. I'd like to start off - got my notes on another page so just bear with me - with our revenues on page 135. A couple of explanations. Pool licenses expired at the end of April and we are now processing a lot of those licenses. You will see that that number was low as of the 31st of March but that should pick up and a lot of people really don't think of their pool licenses, the outdoors specifically until Memorial Day.

Our food service revenues have increased dramatically since we increased our fees thanks to Board members for support and some guidance on that. We forecast for \$175,000 and that looked like an awful lot of money but at today's date, I went into Lawson and checked and we have received \$150,000 in revenues. I think the fee structure is more equitable. I think it will certainly help the sustainability of the department but it also offers lessening of a burden to the taxpayers. So I appreciate the support on that.

We are also looking next at looking at our spa and pool licenses. So you'll see those come to you for ordinance changes sometime in the near future as well as our septic license fees.

Our solid waste hauler licenses - those expire at the end of June. They're going to be mailed out next week and the rest are fairly minor.

Violation revenue - we may actually end up bringing more than I expected. We are finding that ticketing is very effective in motivating people who are not otherwise motivated when it comes to correcting things in food service facilities. We looked at it as a last resort prior to license suspension but we're finding that it garners a lot of respect. That's it for revenues. Do I wait for questions on revenues or?

Chairman Dowd

Anyone want to ask questions on revenues before we get into appropriations? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yeah, so what's the solid waste license?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Those are the solid waste haulers who come through town and use the landfill. We license them.

Alderman Jette

That's not done by the Department of Public Works?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

It is as well but we're able to say for instance on a main road in Nashua one time we had all the trash from a dentist's office spilling out in front of a school. Because we licensed the company, we have the authority to say come down, clean it up, pick it up. So it's more about what happens out in the community than within the landfill.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. I was just curious to know how much a health violation was. How much is the ticket?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

It varies on the severity of what it is. I think the most recent one that we issued last couple of days was operating without a license and I think the first offense is \$100. It's typically it's tiered so that it's a three-step process. They go up incrementally and for that one, that requires a court date at the end of that cycle. Some of the other ones for more minor violations, and these were written for our what we call our "critical violations", those that have a direct effect on the public's health so that's what we chose for ticketing.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Appropriations?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

For our appropriations, one thing I wanted to mention is that we actually did request more money for our wages. It's a difference of about \$3,000. We asked to have reassessment done of a position. She's had a variety of titles in the department. She is currently Office Manager/Environmental Health Tech. and that was rejected. That request was rejected but her job description is about 21 years old. I still think it was a reasonable request. Yes and there were additional duties assigned and because with changes in software, with the changes in our billing process, she's often viewed as an Admin. She is not an Admin. The title we were looking at was Business Manager. She actually serves as the third person within the department if the Health Officer and the Deputy Health Officer are not available. She assigns the majority of the work and does a lot of hand-holding with our business community. If we had to go hire somebody brand new, we'd probably be paying them a lot more money.

So I'll go through the other things where there have been changes. We have asked for and received \$4,000 for overtime. One of the things - and you can see that we've spent a little over \$6,000 so far. We asked HR about a comp time policy and they figured that out for us. So for a couple of people, comp time is attractive for them and so we're offsetting that a little bit. So we're pretty confident with the \$4,000.

The next line that has gone up would be under consulting services. This is for Dragon Mosquito for our mosquito surveillance. This has increased based on the cost of fuel. All of what they do in the field has to be done on a cold chain with mosquito collections. So dry ice has become very expensive and that's for staffing costs as well.

We went down a little bit for telephone cellular.

We increased our mileage reimbursements a little bit because we have been one of our city vehicles was totaled and we're sharing. People will use their own vehicle when they have a specific route that they're working.

Conferences and seminars. For us, a lot of our conferences and seminars have been free or reduced for us because a lot of them are from the federal government. I'm sure that that will change in the future but I'm confident that we can probably get through this next year with less money.

We've added back a line for protective clothing. We're asking for a nominal amount for \$400 in there. We do messy jobs. It's nice to have offer staff something that they can wash but there is a trend where people will pretend to be inspectors

going into food service facilities. So having the City seal and being immediately recognized on a piece of clothing is very helpful.

Miscellaneous supplies - we added a little bit. As Kim had mentioned, this is a catch all for us as well. We bought safety equipment. We bought the documents for licenses when they weren't available before we go through this some of those pretty quickly and that is about it.

Chairman Dowd

Questions? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

So you said that you had asked for an increase for one of your employees. How would that increase salaries and wages? How much more are you looking for?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

\$3,046.

Alderman Jette

And so do you know what that would raise your requested amount to?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

\$4,000 my math skills are horrible. So I believe that what we had requested was \$450,585.

Alderman Jette

Okay, it says \$452,777 under total 51.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Oh, you're doing the total? Oh, okay. So it'd be an additional \$3,046.

Alderman Jette

So it's an additional \$3,000 to wages full time.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Yes.

Alderman Jette

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

All set?

Alderman Jette

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan?

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. Along those same lines for employees, I found it the back of the book. You have six full-time employees, correct?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

We do.

Alderman Sullivan

Okay. Now granted I don't know if you've looked at this or not but it says here that with all of those salaries added in, you're at \$447,539. Does that include overtime?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

No, it does not because the people who collect overtime are hourly and there is the line for overtime.

Alderman Sullivan

I think I just figured it out. That number must include benefits. That's me thinking out loud. Thanks.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Through you to Alderman Sullivan, where in the back of the book did you...

Alderman Sullivan

Well 252.

Chairman Dowd

This year we added the staffing levels for every single Division Department, so that you have that info. The salaries reflected are the total salaries.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you. We're all struggling with this new book.

Chairman Dowd

I just got it today too. Any other questions? Okay. So that covers Environmental Health. So Welfare Administration.

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Good evening. Bob Mack, Welfare Officer for the City of Nashua. I believe we start on page 139. I believe.

Alderman Wilshire

Yes. You do.

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

So starting with the revenues for the department, we have minimal revenues that we collect basically through personal reimbursements of clients. We do collect some reimbursements if we have liens against real properties, if we've assisted people that own property, and if they ever do anything, refinance, or sell that property, we get some reimbursement

through any of those liens. Occasionally, what happens primarily with personal reimbursements is clients may apply to us because let's say that a utility was disconnected. They have \$200 to pay towards the utility but the utility company wants \$500, we're able to call the utility company, assist them with a lesser amount, say \$150, and so we will make that payment, help them get into a payment arrangement, and they will reimburse us that amount of money which is less than what they would have had to pay initially. So it's just it's kind of a win, win situation for them to be able to get into a reasonable payment plan. So those are just a couple of the ways we get reimbursements. We don't see a lot of them and they're kind of hard to predict. So I don't know if there are any questions on that?

Chairman Dowd

I think it's pretty simple. Go on to appropriations.

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Thank you. Appropriations - so there aren't any real significant changes there. The salaries fall in line with the salary grid. We are a department of five staff people that are fully funded by the City. We are fully staffed at this point.

Moving down into some of the other lines. The only real change, we did make an adjustment to the mileage as we move back to in-person meetings, and conferences, and trainings. We're just having more travel whether it's meetings within the community or frequently to Concord for some trainings and various meetings. So there weren't any real significant changes there. I don't know if there were any questions?

Chairman Dowd

Any questions on revenue, appropriations? Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yes, thank you. So under revenues, you have sale of software \$12,500. What's that for?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yes. I'm sorry. That was a bit of a surprise. We developed a software. We purchased the software system years ago when the old VAX admin system was not working. Some people remember that system. So that wasn't working. I think Environmental Health may still use that part of that system. I don't know. No, I think you finally moved away from that.

Kim Bernard, Chief Public Health Nurse

We miss it.

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

So we had purchased a system from another community. Through our IT Department, they did some enhancements, reworked it, changed it, did what IT does. Stuff that goes well over my head but they created a very workable, usable system for us. We had another community approach us about what we were using and they ended up purchasing that system from us. So I was actually kind of surprised that we got some credit for that. I thought it would just go into an IT fund. So I guess if I go out and market the system maybe we'll generate more revenue.

Chairman Dowd

Follow up Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Yes. When I go back a long, long, time ago when I first started practicing law, I was a legal aid attorney here in Nashua. I kind of recall that this that the State law required cities and towns to provide welfare assistance whenever it was needed. So is that still true? I mean if somebody's in real need, you've got to help them by law, right?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yes.

Alderman Jette

You can't say well I've run out of money. I can't help you. So if there's a surge in need, you would have to come back to us I guess and say I need more money and the State law requires that you fulfill that need. Am I correct about that?

Chairman Dowd

It's the next subject if we want to jump into Welfare Assistance because this was just the Welfare Administration.

Alderman Jette

Oh, I'm sorry.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions on Welfare Administration? Yes, Alderwoman Kelly.

Alderwoman Kelly

Mine's Assistance also.

Chairman Dowd

Okay. Any others? All right. Welfare Assistance.

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Okay. Thank you. To answer your question Alderman Jette, yes the requirement of RSA 165 that municipalities must provide this general assistance to those that are eligible. We unlike some other organizations, or charitable foundations, or what have you if they do not have money, they may be able to say we unfortunately we can't help you. We don't have that money. Municipalities cannot do that under the Statute. I won't go into the history of 20 some odd years ago but. With the Welfare General Assistance, there were a couple iterations of this budget and the requests. Initially requesting a little more and then in evaluating what we have as an expendable welfare trust, we have a substantial amount of money in that about \$385,000. As you may have seen from the monthly reports that are sent to the Board, the last report through April we had spent about 95% of our general assistance budget. At this date, we've pretty much spent our budget for the year so we will be looking to tap into that Expendable Trust Fund projecting you know, maybe \$50,000 to \$60,000 to get to the end of the year that we may be over budget. So we would tap into that fund which would bring that down to about \$320,000 give or take.

Keeping that in mind, the proposal here in the budget book to level fund the general assistance would take into account that if we exhaust that money, if we keep on the current run rate of what we're spending of about \$40,000 to \$41,000 a month, that would put us around \$500,000 or so for the year. Even with the tapping into the Welfare Expendable Trust this current fiscal year, we'd still have about \$300,000 to \$320,000 in that fund that we would then tap into. The only thing we can use the fund for is to make up for overages in the general assistance budget. So that is part of this proposal here. Again Alderman Jette as you said, we can't say we don't have the money so we can assist you but we do have that fund that we can tap into.

Chairman Dowd

Questions? Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you and you beat me to the punch because I was going to ask around the fact that you've pretty much extended your budget for this year assuming that's around some of the COVID money expiring and people needing more assistance because that ended?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yes that and the cost of rents increasing 15 to 30% over the last year or so. Again, we're kind of hoping that a lot of the development that's going on in the community with housing units might help to bring that down a bit.

Alderman Kelly

Hopefully for sure. So it sounded like what you are going to use for the short call this year would be the Welfare Trust Fund. Given the numbers you said, we'd also have to take another 150 out next year is that about correct?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Anywhere from \$85,000 to \$150,000. In some ways, it's hard to predict until you're kind of into it. It depends on changes in the economy, again the housing market, what the impact may be of all the construction that's taking place in the City, if there are any other programs. One of the things that that we focus a lot on, our staff focus on, is connecting people to other resources. So some recent efforts have actually generated some additional housing choice vouchers for youth that are experiencing homelessness. So some of those efforts in conjunction with the United Way, and the Nashua Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and DCYF have created some of those opportunities. But similar to other grants and other programs across the division and across the City, some of them come and go and so you're you never really know how long they're going to be around or how they may work out.

Alderman Kelly

Follow up?

Chairman Dowd

Follow up.

Alderman Kelly

Thank you. You may not know the answer but I'm wondering if we know how that Welfare Trust Fund is funded?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yes. The Welfare Trust Fund, if I may, was established as I understand it back in 1997. When I first became employed with the City, there was about \$16,000 in it. At that point, we were about \$400,000 - \$500,000 overspent in the general assistance budget. So that \$16,000 didn't do very much at that point. So we had to budget accordingly over the years. As we budgeted, as things shifted in the economy, we would have a higher general assistance budget. Over time as we brought on more staff, we did more leveraging, accessing community resources, etc. as we started to underspend, so in like 2003-2004 we were actually able to take some of the money that we did not spend in the general assistance budget. So in 2004, I think it was, we put \$100,000 into that fund and then in 2005 another \$200,000 into that fund. So it got it up to a reasonable amount and however it accrues interest and such. It got up to this 385 that it's at today.

Chairman Dowd

All set.

Alderman Kelly

I just wanted to clarify. So what you're saying is that there's no consistent funding. It's just if you're underspent, you can throw money in there and that's pretty much how it gets funded?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yeah, I think there was a goal to get it to a certain point so that would be a reasonable amount as a backup in case we needed it.

Alderman Kelly

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette and then Alderman Wilshire?

Alderman Jette

So if you're saying that you expect to spend around \$500,000, does it really make sense to only budget \$415,000?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

That's a very good question Alderman Jette. Some of the communications around how to budget for the general assistance initially involved increasing the general assistance budget. Follow-up conversations were around utilizing the trust. Because, again, even if we go over which most likely it will, we still have a significant amount of money in that trust. So we should not be running a great risk of running out of money for general assistance if that makes sense.

Alderman Jette

And what's the reference, what's the number for that trust fund?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

That I do not know.

Alderman Sullivan

I have it right here. It's on page 242. It's Fund #7042.

Alderman Jette

Okay, thank you.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Alderman Wilshire?

Alderman Wilshire

I always have to mention how proud I am of the work that Mr. Mack has done over the years. I was here on the Board when he started. He has just overhauled this department. It's amazing what a difference he's made and I'm gonna sing that song every time because I really believe that you do a great job. Welfare assistance is like crime and snow. Unpredictable. You don't know how much you're going to have, how much you're going to need because, you know, it could snow 20 times in the winter. It could snow twice. So I look at that way but I think he does a fabulous job. I think he runs a good department and I always appreciate you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

I have a very similar tradition to President Wilshire saying, I cannot believe we're not asking for more money because of what I see happening on the ground. I would point out that Director Mack has a very long history as long as I've been Alderman and longer of managing the Welfare Department. I think if he's suggesting that it might be wise to add to that department that might be something we'd want to consider. Given that this is the first time that I'm actually heard him say he's willing to accept more money, I would support it towards the end and try an amendment. I would also point out that the whole Board has to agree and it would be in the context of after we do the whole budget. I think it does alarm me that we don't have a consistent funding mechanism for the general assistance fund beyond using the endowment fund. Its funding in the past has been essentially the function of windfalls. It doesn't sound like that happens on an ongoing basis. The last examples were given over 10 years ago. So I think I would like to see some kind of forecasting to see what we can reliably expect in future years because I don't want to leave it to 2026 and 2027 people suddenly have a budgetary

issue and have to decide whether they're going to - how they're going to fund the general assistance fund. I think that's something we should probably be looking at today.

I do note that all of the partners that we have as a City are expanding their program for the most part. I know a couple of years ago Harbor Homes closed Maple Street. I was there and that was a decrease but that wasn't due to lack of occupation by any means. We're looking at programs like Nashua Soup Kitchen investing significant amounts of revenue and expansion and programs like Stepping Stones being conceived and invented because the sense is there isn't enough being done in those areas. So I definitely recognize that Director Mack's strategic leveraging of resources has done a lot for the City. I think that's where President Wilshire and I definitely agree that taxpayers get a very good bargain for the amount of work that City Welfare does to corral all of the different well-meaning agencies that otherwise, you know, even my initial workings with them weren't coordinating or collaborating with each other quite so well and that does definitely speak to Director Mack's participation because I think at some point he was chairing everything and Continuum of Care, just trying to keep people coordinating, collaborating, and working together.

So I don't want my comments to be taken as any kind of criticism of his performance. More to the effect that he, I think, has a more steady hand when it comes to this kind of stuff than I do. My sense would be we should be putting more resources in earlier. If he's suggesting that we might need to start thinking along those lines, then I'm definitely listening. So with all of that being said and with Alderman Jette's comments about anybody who's eligible not being unable to receive assistance. We did review the Welfare Guidelines a couple of years ago. Correct me if I'm wrong but if there is another agency that can pay for something, or you can provide resources, that's our default setting as we would forward people to them. If a person doesn't meet eligibility criteria, for example, having received services previously under certain conditions, those are not considered people who receive resources, is that correct? Do you want to clarify?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Yes, that's accurate. We do leverage resources in the community, refer to other programs. Other programs do also refer to us. They want us to do an initial assessment in many cases and there are occasions where people that have received assistance if they do not comply with our guidelines may not be eligible for assistance.

Alderman Lopez

So while I respect the guidelines, I understand, believe me firsthand how they came about. My belief that overall that people in need of welfare assistance is expanding, is also informed by the opinions of Department of Public Works for example, that there's a lot more need for community campsite cleanups. We've been doing a lot more organizing to get multiple organizations together to do homeless outreach and coordinate and collaborate care. I've been doing a lot more literal picking up on trash like a couple by the dozen bags cleanups at this point that I've been getting local like Ace Hardware to donate bags for. I've been coordinating with the Public Works to try to help at least ease a little bit of it. When we have people who are not housed and we have people that are in need of assistance and they don't get it on the onsite, it still costs our City in other areas and we do see the impacts. I think I am not the only Alderman who's had a lot more calls from constituents lately. We all are fully aware of the things that are going on in Manchester and regionally when it comes to that.

We haven't had a crisis here in Nashua in terms of large numbers of people establishing campsites and us not being able to dislodge them but that doesn't mean that if we aren't vigilant with how we support our Welfare Office and the organizations that partner with it, then we wouldn't. So those are things that I'm concerned about. I trust Director Mack's presentation of the budget. I trust the Mayor's general oversight that he's not looking to like have a homeless crisis in his next election here or anything like that but I wouldn't let this meeting pass without saying we need to be very, very conscious of this.

I echo Alderman Kelly's concerns about the trust fund. I think it might be a good idea to start looking at how to plan that deliberately and see if either there's a consistent revenue source or at least if we could have somebody assess that financially and say based on trending, this is where we should start hitting the panic button and saying okay politics can't get in the way of this. We do need to start adding funding or we're going to hit a problem.

Chairman Dowd

Okay any last minute questions for Public Health and Community Service? Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. I just wanted to clarify when we're looking at assistance shelter that is like emergency shelter when we tend to cover like motel fees and that kind of thing. It's not like we're covering rent is that true?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Actually that line does include rental costs. It's just been designated as a shelter line. It does also cover emergency motel costs. The bulk of that line is prevention and rental assistance to prevent evictions.

Alderman Kelly

Okay. My follow up question was going to be as we see more units come on board with people working on really hard is that going to bring that number down but if its current rental assistance not necessarily. Is that true?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

That could be correct, yes.

Alderman Kelly

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

Yes, Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could take a step back to Heidi and you made the suggestion to look for more money for that particular employee? I would assume that that employee is at the top of the matrix within her grade?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Yes.

Alderman O'Brien

So therefore, there's no recalculation on the matrix to accommodate her?

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

No not at the current grade level.

Alderman O'Brien

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Yes?

Alderman Lopez

Thank you for your indulgence Chairman Dowd. One more question to Director Mack just because I feel like it should be aired. I can see that this might be not viable but the idea crossed my mind without getting either creating a bucket or a mechanism to accept sponsors to augment our Welfare Assistance Fund to see if people would be willing to invest or corporations would be willing to donate funds. Do we have any partners that are actually doing that because we had a community asset going for a while?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Well I think with the general assistance fund being a mandated fund through the State Statute, I mean I think there were some smaller communities that have small buckets of different grants and whatnot. Most of those grant funds in our community go to agencies and other organizations. So I might suggest that we focus on those agencies receiving that money and working partnering with those agencies to allow them to administer some of the programs to supplement what we may not be able to assist with if that makes sense.

Alderman Lopez

That's your current strategy?

Robert Mack, Manager/Welfare Officer

Well as was mentioned, some people don't qualify for our assistance or they can only get a portion of what they may need. We often leverage that assistance by connecting them to these other resources that may have more flexibility because they have different guidelines or it's a different structure. So if that makes sense but it's something we could absolutely look at and look into further to explore different avenues.

Alderman Lopez

At least identify if there's like an emergency Red Cross fund somewhere or something so that if we did run into that area that I'm concerned about that we wouldn't have to take.

Chairman Dowd

All set? Alderman Wilshire?

Alderman Wilshire

I don't know if it's coincidence but it's Nurses Week. I just want to thank the nurses in the room for all their work and appreciate everything you do.

Chairman Dowd

Always overworked and underpaid. Alderman O'Brien?

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO TABLE R-23-125
MOTION CARRIED**

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Jette?

Alderman Jette

Since Ms. Bagley is here. You had requested a couple of Ford Escapes I think for your Department?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

Yes for Environmental Health.

Alderman Jette

Through the Finance and they tabled it to look at EVs. What was the result of that? Has happened resolved?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

That while the goal is to get two electric vehicles and I believe there's been some progress that's been made with that with getting the electric Volts.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Yes if I may. It's gone out to bid for a total of three electric vehicles - two of which are for Environmental Health and I believe the other one is for Transit.

Alderman Jette

Good. Thank you.

Heidi Peek-Kukulka, Manager/Health Officer

Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman O'Brien?

Alderman O'Brien

Yeah now they mentioned the electric vehicles, is your building - I know we spent money to upgrade it. Can you handle that? Is there going to be additional infrastructure costs to charge up these particular vehicles? You'll have to come back to the Board in the future?

Bobbie Bagley, Director Division of Health and Community Services

I don't know.

Alderman O'Brien

Okay.

Chairman Dowd

So that's another story for another day.

Alderwoman Kelly

If I could?

Chairman Dowd

Is this another day?

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you so much Alderman Dowd. I just would say that it has come up in Energy and Environment and that has been one of the things we're talking about is how do we make sure that we scale up for infrastructure for things like that. So it's being discussed.

Chairman Dowd

So we just added five at the Public Works building. We have put in the capability to add charging stations at the McCarthy School. I think up to 20 but you have to make sure that you have the power capability to power those. Sometimes it requires a new circuit breaker or even a transformer. I'm sure Doria Brown will look into that.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Sullivan

Happy Mother's Day.

Alderman O'Brien

I miss my mum!

Chairman Dowd

Alderwoman Kelly?

Alderwoman Kelly

I just wanted to thank you for your Budget layout. I've never done it this way but I do really like the clipping being able to move things around.

Chairman Dowd

I had to twist arms to get this.

Alderwoman Kelly

I agree with that. Very nice. I'm going to get nerdy and color code things.

Chairman Dowd

I just thought of it tonight. I wish we'd given all the Division Directors three ring binders rather than that pressed book but they'd probably still be waiting for them. Anyway. All right a motion.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 9:12 p.m.

Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Committee Clerk



Nashua Teachers' Union

AFT Local 1044, AFL-CIO

7C Taggart Drive, Nashua, NH 03060 | 603-888-7544 | nashuatu.org

May 11, 2023

Adam A. Marcoux
President

Gary Hoffman
Vice President

Stacy Gingras
Treasurer

Patrick Johnson
Secretary

Michelle Quadros
Member-at-Large

Patty Gagnon
Member-at-Large

Stephanie Keating-Bayrd
Member-at-Large

The Honorable Richard A. Dowd
Chairman, Budget Review Committee
Board of Aldermen
City of Nashua
229 Main Street
Nashua, NH 03060

Dear Alderman Dowd,

I am writing to you to express my support in the passage of R-23-117, approving the cost items of a collective bargaining agreement between the Nashua Board of Education and the Nashua Teachers' Union, Local 1044, AFT, AFL-CIO, Unit B – Paraeducators. I will not be able to attend the meeting in person as I have a conflict, but I want to provide my feedback to your committee.

Our paraeducators are crucial to the success of our schools. They work with some of our most challenging students and are often pulled in multiple directions a day. This group is and continues to be underpaid. We did, however, make moves to increase the pay across the salary schedule. As always, we will need to continue to work to increase the salaries and benefits for this group.

The first tentative agreement was initially rejected by the membership. We went back to the table and worked to make some tweaks that were accepted by the membership and subsequently approved by the Board of Education.

I respectfully ask the Budget Review Committee to recommend final passage to the Board of Aldermen.

Respectfully,

Adam A. Marcoux
President, Nashua Teachers' Union